



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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Protecting the innocent is Prince William woman's mission

Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect presents awards to outstanding advocates

Richmond, VA — The Commonwealth recognizes April as Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month, but for **Laurie Wilson of Prince William County**, protecting children is a year-round mission. The Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect Awards recognize Virginians who have exhibited a strong commitment to advocacy, protection, prevention, treatment and assistance. Wilson is among this year's honorees.

The Governor's Advisory Board (GAB) presented Certificate of Appreciation Awards to outstanding child advocates at this year's Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month Conference in Richmond on April 2. Wilson, child and family services division chief for Prince William County department of social services (DSS), was one of only six Virginians to receive the award.

"It is an honor and a privilege to recognize the men and women who champion the safety and security of our children," said Governor Timothy Kaine. "Their focus on prevention is especially critical."

Wilson is responsible for protective services, family treatment, foster care, adoption and adult services with Prince William County DSS. Wilson was instrumental in developing programs to reduce the risk of child abuse and neglect and promote the safety and well-being of children. Her work has contributed to the county's decrease in recidivism by lowering the risk of continued abuse.

Other Certificate of Appreciate winners included:

- a Chesapeake attorney who makes himself available 24 hours a day to represent the abused;
- a Norfolk pediatrician who works to raise the standards for other physicians;
- an 80-year-old Virginia Beach woman who has been a child advocate for more than four decades;
- a central Virginia lawyer who has represented more than 500 children;
- and a Hampton agency solely dedicated to providing programs that prevent abuse and neglect and strengthen families

The awards and conference were sponsored by the Virginia Department of Social Services and Prevent Child Abuse Virginia and co-sponsored by the Governor's Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect, the Family and Children's Trust Fund, the Child Abuse Prevention Committee and the Virginia Coalition for Child Abuse Prevention.

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Home Office is located in Richmond and administers social services programs, consistent with federal and state law and policy of the State Board of Social Services through 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) throughout the state. The VDSS mission is "People helping people triumph over poverty, abuse, and neglect to shape strong futures for themselves, their families and communities."

For more information, go to:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov>

<http://www.preventchildabuseva.org>

<http://www.fact.state.va.us>

<http://www.governor.virginia.gov/CitizenServices/ConstituentServices/Proclamations/2007/ChildAbusePrevMonth.cfm>

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/index.html>

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cps/prevention_month.cgi

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Attached is a photo of Laurie Wilson. Interviews and additional photos available upon request. For additional story ideas and for information on how your media outlet can help raise awareness of child abuse, neglect and prevention, please contact Carla Harris, VDSS, (804) 726-7107 or carla.harris@dss.virginia.gov.